

## SONGS

1. Taize: The Lord is my light and my help
2. Jan Novotka: In the name of all that is we come together
3. Kathy Sherman: Touch the Earth [Praying in a New Time CD]
4. Jan Novotka: I say 'Yes' [Praying in a New Time CD]



## RITUALS

1. Walking together outdoors, taking time to notice the twilight, the setting sun, the sky, the trees, water [where available].
2. Carrying a twig or a stone as a symbol
3. Holding and scattering leaves on the earth
4. Crossing thresholds
5. Blessings with symbols of the earth



Christian Brothers



European Province



## Introductory note:

These resources were compiled from Autumn/Equinox/Twilight rituals held in the Emmaus Retreat Centre, Swords, Co. Dublin and on the banks of the Grand Canal in Edenderry, Co. Offaly.

**The resources are arranged under the following headings:**

1. Readings (General)
2. Readings (Scripture)
3. Prayers
4. Songs
5. Rituals



This booklet has been produced by the Province Spirituality Group of the European Province of the Christian Brothers. Thanks are due to the Sisters of St. John of God who shared their resources with us. Further information about the rituals available from Brothers Seán Beckett, Tom Costello, Raymond Maynes, Jim Donovan, Monica O'Reilly and Vivek da Silva. Sincere thanks to Br. Colm Griffey who produced the booklet.

## 4. Prayers of the Faithful

1. For Pope Francis and all the Leaders of the Churches that they may be blessed in their Ministry of Leadership and may they lead their faithful in a new awareness and reverence for creation.  
**Response: Creator God Hear Our Prayer**
- 2 That our Political Leaders in every country in the world will wake up to the call of the Universe and do all in their power to protect the environment.  
**Response: Creator God Hear Our Prayer**
- 3 For all the people who have worked within their local community, people who take a pride in their estates and gardens, may they be blessed and may they encourage others to continue the good work.  
**Response: Creator God Hear Our Prayer**
4. That young people everywhere may be inspired by the example of Saint Francis to care for the earth and to respect the rights of the human person and every creature.  
**Response: Creator God Hear Our Prayer**
5. That all of us gathered here from different faiths, different countries may begin to take a new interest and active part in working together to protect and build our common home.  
**Response: Creator God Hear Our Prayer**
6. May all those who have gone before us and who worked for the care of the earth rest in peace.  
**Response: Creator God Hear Our Prayer**



## Prayers

1. On this day the blessings of heaven.  
On this day the blessings of earth.  
On this day the blessings of sea and sky,  
to open us to life, to ground us in life and with wonder.  
On those we love this day and on every human family  
the blessings of heaven,  
the blessings of earth, the blessings of sea and sky.

(Praying with the Earth - John P. Newell)

2. O Breath of God, this leaf is my life.  
Come with your transforming breath.  
Descend from the heavens, rise up out of the earth.  
Surround me with your liberating breath.

Free me from the things that keep me tied to only what I know.  
Reveal to me the things that hinder,  
those things that prevent me from being a blessing  
in the lives of others.  
Take away my leaves of resentment,  
fear, apathy, indifference, weariness and greed.

Help me to surrender and let go of whatever keeps me from total  
openness to you.  
Empty me that there may be a beautiful new space in me for renewal.  
I offer you this leaf of my life. Amen

[ *Based on a ritual of letting go of a chosen leaf*]

3. Thanks be to you, O God, for night and its light, for stars that emerge  
out of evening skies and the white moon's radiance. Thanks be to you  
for the earth's unfolding of colour and the bright sheen of creatures  
from ocean depths.

In the darkness of our world and in the night of my own soul let me  
be looking with longing for light, let me be looking in hope.

(Praying with the Earth - John P. Newell)

## Readings

### 1. Entering the New by Henri Nouwen

You have an idea of what the new country looks like. Still, you are very much at home, although not truly at peace in the old country. You know the ways of the old country, its joys and pains, its happy and sad moments. You have spent most of your days there. Even though you know that you have not found there what your heart most desires, you remain quite attached to it. It has become part of your very bones.

Now you have come to realize that you must leave it and enter the new country, where your Beloved dwells. You know that what helped and guided you in the old country no longer works, but what else do you have to go by? You are being asked to trust that you will find what you need in the new country. That requires the death of what has become so precious to you: influence, success, yes, even affection and praise.

Trust is so hard, since you have nothing to fall back on. Still, trust is what is essential. The new country is where you are called to go, and the only way to go there is naked and vulnerable. It seems that you keep crossing and recrossing the border. For a while you experience a real joy in the new country.

But then you feel afraid and start longing again for all you left behind, so you go back to the old country.



To your dismay, you discover the old country has lost its charm. Risk a few more steps in the new country, trusting that each time you enter it, you will feel more comfortable and be able to stay longer.

## 2. The Pond

Still, what I want in my life is to be willing to be dazzled –  
to cast aside the weight of facts  
and maybe even to float a little above this difficult world.  
I want to believe I am looking  
into the white fire of a great mystery.  
I want to believe that the imperfections are nothing –  
that the light is everything – that it is more than the sum  
of each flawed blossom rising and falling.  
And I do.

by Mary Oliver

**3. Protect Creation.** The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.

Please, I would like to ask all those who have responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be ‘protectors’ of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world! But to be ‘protectors’, we also have to keep watch over ourselves!

To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! It is a hope built on a rock which is God.

[Pope Francis]

## Scripture Reading

1. Matthew 5: 14-16

“You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill.

If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand.

Now that I’ve put you there on a hill top, on a light stand – shine!

Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous father in heaven.” (The Message Publication)

2. Gospel of Mark 6: 45-50 Jesus walks on the Water.





## 5. The Black Snake

When the black snake flashed onto the morning road,  
and the truck could not swerve—  
death, that is how it happens.  
Now he lies looped and useless as an old bicycle tyre.  
I stop the car and carry him into the bushes.

He is as cool and gleaming as a braided whip,  
he is as beautiful and quiet as a dead brother.  
I leave him under the leaves and drive on,  
thinking about death: its suddenness,  
its terrible weight, it's certain coming.

Yet under reason burns a brighter fire,  
which the bones have always preferred.  
It is the story of endless good fortune.  
It says to oblivion: not me!  
It is the light at the center of every cell.

It is what sent the snake coiling  
and flowing forward happily all spring  
through the green leaves before it came to the road.

by Mary Oliver



## 6. When I am Among the Trees



When I am among the trees,  
especially the willow and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks and pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, 'Stay awhile.'  
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, 'It's simple,' they say,  
'and you too have come  
into the world to do this, to go easy,  
to be filled with light, and to 'shine'.

by Mary Oliver

## 7. **The Cosmic Dance** by Joyce Rupp.

If there is a lesson to be learned it is that in busyness I often close down. In deliberate or unexpected awareness, I open up. It is in this openness that I “see” in a deeper or newer way, viewing people, creatures, and nature in a clearer light.

As I open and become more aware, something happens inside of me to cause the barriers of my inattentiveness, judgements, or busyness to move aside and for bonding to occur. It is then that I recognise my oneness with the dancing that is inherent in all creation.

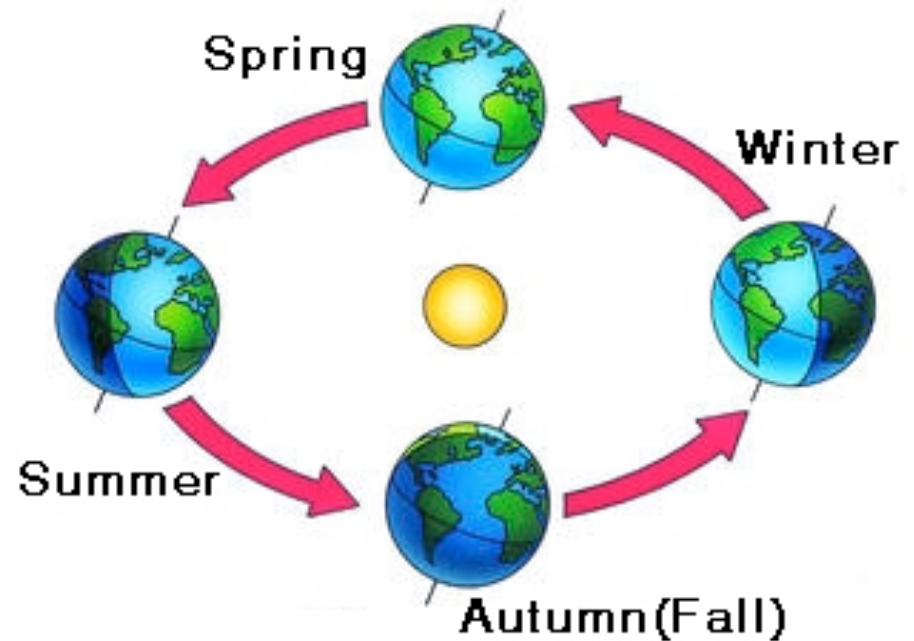
Daily I must set out again and again, to have an open mind and a compassionate heart. Daily I must perk up my external senses and commune with my internal ones, as well. The cosmos holds out her cup of life to me, filled with invisible packets of energy. I need only respond with a desire and an intention to receive. It is then that I enter into the cosmic dance with awareness and gratitude, and hear again the inner voice urging me towards oneness.

## 8. **Season of Creation**

Every part of this earth is sacred,  
Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth.  
The air is precious, for all of us share the same breath.  
This we know, the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth.  
This we know, all things are connected;  
Like the blood that unites one family.  
Our God is the same God, whose compassion is equal for all.  
For we did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it.  
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

Chief Seattle 1854 (Adapted)

4. **Autumn Equinox** September darkness is of a certain kind – soft and slightly mushy, almost sweet. It is to this seasonal dark we are drawn in this walk ..... We are here to give witness to this occurrence so that it does not pass unobserved like so much in our lives; to witness to the twin mysteries of our existence – darkness and light.



It is good for us to be here to praise day and night in equal measure, each with its paradox – the day with its source in darkness, the dark nurturing seeds of light. The September or Autumn equinox is a slow dance of seeming opposites, a taking in each other's arms, so to speak, of one's shadow, of finding completeness in one's opposite. This occasion points up for us the desire of creation and our deep desire to commune, to dance, as we live in the awareness of our earth's face held in the gaze of the sun.

[Eucharist by Hugh O'Donnell]